THE OLD TESTAMENT IS A GOOD NEWS STORY

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Category: Quotes

" When Jesus referred his disciples to "the law of Moses and prophets and the psalms" (Luke 24:44), he was specifying not merely the predictive prophecies but the whole canon of what we now call the Old Testament, in full sweep, direction and flow of its grand narrative. The Torah includes the story of creation, the fall, God's covenant promise to Abraham with its universal vision, the exodus redemption of Israel, the Sinai covenant, and the anticipation of a future that would see the ultimate triumph of the faithfulness and grace of God over the rebellion and judgement of his people. "The Prophets," in the Hebrew canon, include the Former Prophets (the so called Deuteronomic History from Joshua to 2 Kings), telling the story of the gift of the land, the emergence of monarch and the covenant with David, the long decline into the death of exile and the "resurrection" of the return from exile.And in the course of this great story, in passages drawn from all three sections (Law, Prophets and Psalms), we find again and again the note of Gods universal purpose for all nations. We are reminded often that this story is ultimately one that will embrace all nations and indeed all creation within God's redemptive covenant blessings. The Old Testament is, in fact, a good news story, even if the good news has not arrived yet.

Sadly, the Old Testament is often presented as a kind of negative backdrop, a contrasting foil for the gospel - something *from which* the gospel actually rescues us. We easily treat theÂ *distortion* of the Old Testament by Paul's opponents as if it were what the Old Testament itself taught. Now of course, as Paul full acknowledged (in company with Jesus, Moses and all the prophets), theÂ *people of Israel* failed miserably, proving themselves to be just as much sin-laden, fallen rebels as the rest of the human race. But theÂ *purposes of God* were not nullified by the failure of Israel. On the contrary, theÂ *good news* of the Old Testament is precisely the promise and undying hope that Yahweh, the god of Israel, would triumph over evil, would reign as king and would bring salvation to the ends of the earth. That "gospel" was first announced to Abraham, says Paul, quoting Genesis 12:3 (Galatians 3:8). And even the ken New Testament gospel wordsÂ *euangelion,Â* andÂ *euangelizomai* come from the Greek translations of the Old Testament "good new" texts about the reign of God among the nations, such as Psalm 96:1-3 and Isaiah 52:7-10."

One last quote (probably) fromÂ Christian Mission in the Modern WorldÂ (pp 83-84).